

Last week, I had a candid discussion with bloggers about sexual assault in the military. We talked about how we are tackling these "insider attacks" within the Joint Force and how we need everyone to stop this ... we can't have bystanders. It's up to all of us to take care of our own and combat this both top-down and bottom-up. I encourage you to read or listen the forum here (link: <http://www.dodlive.mil/index.php/2014/04/chairman-to-discuss-combating-sexual-assault-in-the-military/>), but also wanted to address one question in further detail.

Gail Harris of the Foreign Policy Association wanted to know about the different ways for a victim to report sexual assault. The chain of command is but one option. Victims can go to the following:

- Military police
- Military Criminal Investigation Organization (MCIO)
- Behavioral health personnel
- Civilian victim advocates
- Chaplains
- Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC)
- Uniformed victim advocates
- Chain of command

And certainly, a victim can always turn to a friend or other service member who can report on their behalf.

Finally, I also want to share that last week, the Air Force Special Victims' Counsel Program received the National Crime Victims' Rights Service Award in the Federal Service category (link: <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2014/April/14-dag-356.html>). This honor recognizes their commitment to support and make a difference in the lives of victims of sexual assault, and their approach is being implemented department-wide. This is a step in the right direction but we have much more work to do to make sure every member feels safe and can focus on the mission.